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Israel-Syria-Lebanon
Talking Points for the DCI
19 July 1983

Domestic Pressure in Israel

The Israeli cabinet today decided to redeploy the army. No details of the planned move were given, but we believe the government will follow earlier army recommendations to move away from Beirut and the Shuf in stages, eventually establishing a line along the Awwali River.

- No date was given for the implementation of the plan, but it will clearly be done shortly. The Israeli press is reporting that Defense Minister Arens will visit the US shortly to discuss the plans and seek US approval.

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While a redeployment will quiet public uneasiness about casualties for the near term, it is unlikely to end widespread concern that the government has no coherent Lebanon policy and is merely reacting to events. Begin will remain under pressure to take further measures to regain the initiative.

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Prospects for Expansion of Lebanese Government Control

Lebanese Army clashes last week with Druze and Shia militias have set back President Gemayel's efforts to gain these groups' cooperation. His most immediate problems remains getting Druze leader Junblatt to agree to Lebanese Army deployment in Shuf.

- Junblatt is insisting that Christian Lebanese forces leave before the Army deploys.
- He also wants guarantee of expanded Druze role in the national government.
- Junblatt has said repeatedly that he will order his militias to attack the army if it deploys without his consent.

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Gemayel government is frustrated by negotiations with Junblatt, who is being pressed into hard line by Syrian Government. In any case, mercurial Junblatt will be difficult to pin down, and Gemayel is unlikely to get ironclad guarantee of cooperation from Druze leader.

- At same time, Gemayel is getting no cooperation from Lebanese Forces commanders, who insist they will not leave Shuf until after Lebanese Army deploys, and appear to be preparing for a confrontation with the Druze.

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Lebanese/Israeli coordination of army deployment to the Shuf is doubtful now after last week's attack by the Druze on a Lebanese army patrol.

- The Lebanese patrol--which was reconnoitering the area under IDF protection--has accused the Israelis of prearranging the Druze ambush, a charge the IDF denies.
- Lebanese Commander Tannous said yesterday (Tuesday) that his army will not enter the Shuf until after the Israelis withdraw.
- Presidential military advisor Habib Fares has also indicated the LAF will not coordinate its deployment with the Israelis. Fares has also said that an Israeli redeployment must not stop at the Damar river but continue to the Awwali and be part of a total Israeli withdrawal.

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If Israel redeploys before political arrangements can be worked out--which appears increasingly likely--Gemayel and Tannous may only try to limit rather than prevent the expected outbreak of Druze-Christian fighting.

- Syria and rebel PLO units will probably come to the aid of the Druze if fighting breaks out.
- Gemayel will want strong MNF support if army deploys without political agreement. He will argue visible MNF presence will deter troublemakers.
- Fares has said however that the LAF will not ask the MNF to move into any area which is not secure.

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Shia leaders are increasingly concerned that Gemayel government will try to force Shias out of Beirut area as part of plan to form Christian mini-state.

- Shia frustrations will take the form of increased urban violence in Beirut.
- Shias will press moderate Muslim politicians to break with Gemayel. Both Prime Minister Wazzan and Speaker of Parliament Assad are under increasing pressure to resign.

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